

Did Solomon “Overlay the Whole Temple with Gold”? A New Look at 1 Kings 6:20-22

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Résumé. Le récit de la construction du Temple de Salomon en 1 Rois 6 évoque à plusieurs reprises des décorations en or ; le passage le plus frappant (v. 20-22) affirme que tout l'intérieur du bâtiment en était revêtu. La plupart des chercheurs s'accordent à dire que ce passage est surchargé. Cet article propose une nouvelle reconstruction de son histoire textuelle, en expliquant l'origine des différences entre TM et LXX. Si cette hypothèse est juste, la forme la plus ancienne du texte affirmait seulement que le lieu très saint (Debir) était couvert d'or, et non qu'il en était de même du lieu saint (Hekal). Si certains exégètes suspectaient déjà cela du fait de considérations historiques ou sur la base de raisonnements de pure critique littéraire, le nouveau scénario défendu ici combine analyse rédactionnelle et critique textuelle.

The account of the building of Solomon's temple (in 1 Kgs 6-7) is a complicated text, replete with obscure details.¹ In spite of various attempts at harmonizing the various indications contained in the descriptions, the problems are often ascribed to the intervention of successive redactors. It is possible that some scribes inserted glosses in order to shed light on some long-forgotten technical details pertaining to the architecture of a temple that had been destroyed many years before; these scribes were not always successful, or perhaps it is modern scholars who are not able to understand everything. It is also conceivable that the account itself was written, from the start, at a time when the Temple did not exist

¹ See for instance E. Blum, “Der Tempelbaubericht in 1 Könige 6,1– 22: Exegetische und historische Überlegungen,” in J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.– 1. Mill. B.C.E.)* (ADPV 41; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 291-316.

anymore. Another theory, recently defended by Dubovský,² is that the description of the Temple was updated to take into account architectural changes made through time. In other words, the stratigraphy of the text would reflect, to some extent, the “stratigraphy” of the temple, or, to be more precise, its architectural development. One of the aspects of the temple’s description that has long been suspected to be secondary is the gilding of its furniture and of its walls, and in this paper I would like to examine the most important verses on this topic, that is, v. 20-22.

1. Too much gold in this house?

Let us begin by looking at the fuller picture. 1 Kings 6 asserts that Solomon overlaid with gold not only some of the furniture of the Temple, such as an altar (v. 21), the two cherubim inside the Debir (v. 28) and the doors (v. 32, 35), but also the floor of the Temple (v. 30), the (walls of the) Debir (v. 20), and even the whole house (v. 21-22). Some commentators, like Stade³ and Würthwein,⁴ think that all these assertions are glosses. Others, like Burney,⁵ believe that only some of these assertions are secondary. Montgomery and Gehman write: “The gilding of the furnishings, as of the altar, is reasonable, but not that of the whole interior”.⁶ According to Fritz, the only mention of gold that is not secondary concerns sculptures on doors (v. 35).⁷ Knauf, in his recent commentary,⁸ ascribes the various mentions of gold to staggered, late redactions.

² P. Dubovský, *The Building of the First Temple: A Study in Redactional, Text-Critical and Historical Perspective* (FAT 103; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

³ B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Historischer Verlag Baumgärtel, 1887), 311-43.

⁴ E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, vol 1: 1. Kön. 17 – 2. Kön. 25 (ATD 11.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 69.

⁵ C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings with an Introduction and an Appendix* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 73-74.

⁶ J. A. Montgomery and H.S. Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1951), 152.

⁷ V. Fritz, *Das erste Buch der Könige* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare: AT 10,1; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1996), 66-67, see also 72.

⁸ E.-A. Knauf, *1 Könige 1-14* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2016), 218, table 8.

There are various reasons why exegetes believe some or all of these references to be additions. Few believe that 10th century Judah could have possessed all the gold mentioned in 1 Kings, even if we understand that the Hebrew verb *צפה* refers here to a “thin gilding with *liquid* gold,” as argued by Burney, rather than “heavy gold plating.”⁹ As noted by Dubovský, another hint of diachronic development is the presence of several inconsistencies.¹⁰ In particular, it is a bit surprising to read in v. 30 that “the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, in the inner and outer rooms,” since it seems to be implied already in v. 19-22. The latter verses already stipulated that these parts of the temple were overlaid in gold, and it would have been a reasonable assumption on the part of the reader to conclude that not only the walls but also the floor and the ceiling had been gilded. If not, that is, if v. 19-22 only concerns the gilding of the walls, then v. 30 does contain new information regarding the floor, but by the end of the chapter it has never been said that the ceiling was overlaid in gold, which is surprising. In addition, the notion that Solomon overlaid the doors of the Debir and of the Hekal with gold (v. 31-35) seems to be contradicted by two other passages in Kings. First, 1 Kgs 7:50, according to which the same doors were *made* of gold. Second, 2 Kings 18:16, according to which it is Hezekiah who overlaid them (presumably with gold). It may be that some of these problems¹¹ are due to modern expectations of consistency and concision that do not align with to the way that Judeans wrote in the first millennium B.C. But it seems difficult to chalk all of the difficulties up to, say, the repetitive style of ancient redactors.

⁹ Burney, 73; more recently, M. J. Mulder, *1 Kings* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 262.

¹⁰ Dubovský, 186-93.

¹¹ Stade also argued that some other texts do not seem to be aware of the presence of this gold in Solomon’s temple. This concerns not only 2 Kings 18:16, as already noted, but also several situations where kings take gold from Jerusalem’s public buildings as booty but do not seem aware that they could take some from inside the temple (1 Kgs 14:14; 2 Kgs 16:17). Similarly, the description of Ezekiel’s temple does not allude to the presence of gilding. For a criticism of these arguments, see Burney, 73-74.

Yet another approach, which I will follow here, consists in examining the differences between the textual witnesses, and above all the Masoretic text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX). These differences sometimes reveal older forms of the text. A famous instance is to be found in this chapter, in v. 11-14: this passage has all the appearances of a theological addition, and indeed, these verses are absent from the Septuagint, which represents here the earliest form of the text.¹² MT contains a number of other, smaller plusses compared to the LXX, notably in the main passage about gilding, that is, v. 20-22, to which I now turn.

2. Literary-critical issues in v. 20-22 (MT)

In MT this passage reads as follows:

20 The interior of the inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high; he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the altar with cedar. 21 Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, then he drew chains of gold across, in front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. 22 Next he overlaid the whole house with gold, in order that the whole house might be perfect; even the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold. (NRSV)

Before discussing the text-critical problems, it is interesting to note that this passage raises several issues in terms of inner consistency:

1. In Hebrew, v. 20 begins with וּלְפָנֵי הַדְּבִיר (“and in front of the Debir”), which is not translated as such in the NRSV. Indeed, it seems out of place.
2. At the end of v. 20 – a verse which concerns the inner sanctuary (Debir) – it is surprising to read a brief clause about the altar (“he also overlaid the altar with cedar”), because there was no altar there, nor in the outer sanctuary (Hekal). Most scholars believe that “altar” designates here the table for the shewbread

¹² R. Müller, J. Pakkala, and B. ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 101-8.

(cf. Exod 25:23-30). In addition, we should certainly read “he made (וַיַּעַשׂ) an altar” as in LXX (ἐποίησεν), because the verb in MT (וַיִּצַּף) is most probably an assimilation to the next verb (וַיִּצַּף),¹³ or perhaps to the previous verb (וַיִּצְפֶּהוּ), or both.¹⁴ The resulting text seems more logical because this is the first mention of the altar, and because it would be strange to mention the material with which the altar is covered but not that of which it is made.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the clause “he made an altar out of cedar” seems to be out of context, and all the more since it is separated from the next mention of the altar (v. 22) by a few sentences that are not about the same subject.

3. Is the beginning of v. 21 about the gilding of the Debir or of the entire temple? Its wording (וַיִּצַּף שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת־הַבַּיִת מִפְּנִימָה זָהָב סָגוֹר) suggests the latter, but in view of the immediate context it could accommodate the former.¹⁶ But in both cases, the text seems redundant. If the beginning of v. 21 only concerns the gilding of the Debir, it repeats what has already been said in v. 20. If it concerns the entire house, the text still contains a repetition, since we read in v. 22 that Solomon “overlaid the whole house with gold.”
4. To which part of the sanctuary does the last clause of v. 21 (“he overlaid it (וַיִּצְפֶּהוּ) with gold”) refer? In other words, what is the antecedent of the personal pronoun suffixed to the verb? If it is “the inner sanctuary”, which is mentioned immediately before, it is, again, a repetition of what has already been said in v. 20 (and perhaps at the beginning of v. 21). If the antecedent is הַבַּיִת

¹³ See already O. Thenius, *Die Bücher der Könige* (KHAT; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1873²), 72.

¹⁴ So Noth, 101. In view of the reconstruction of the textual history I suggest below, it is probably under the influence of the previous verb that the assimilation occurred.

¹⁵ Burney, 74. Also, if one does not accept the notion that this altar is the table for shewbread and if it was a sacrifice altar, then it makes little sense to cover such an altar with wood, since sacrifices are to be burned upon it (B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with Notes* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904], 88).

¹⁶ As argued by M. Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 243.

מִפְּנֵימָה, mentioned at the beginning of v. 21, then the sentence is repetitive.

These problems suggest that the text is overloaded. In fact, from a literary-critical point of view, not only the beginning of v. 20 but also most parts of v. 21-22 have been judged suspicious at some point in the history of research. Thus v. 21a looks like a technical addition. There are, however, two possible ways of translating the expression וַיַּעֲבֵר בְּרִתּוֹקוֹת זָהָב. The most traditional rendering is “he drew chains of gold across,” as in the NRSV. Knauf offers an interesting explanation:

Durch die Vergoldung der ganzen Holztäfelung der Cella v.21 wird eine augenfällige Differenz zwischen Cella [= Hekal] und Adyton [= Debir] wieder aufgehoben. Dafür werden zur Wiederherstellung der Abgrenzung Goldketten gespannt, und auch vergoldet.¹⁷

The other possible translation, suggested by Korpel¹⁸ and adopted by Dubovský,¹⁹ is “he spread gold over the surface by means of solder-seams.” Whatever the translation one prefers, v. 21a looks like a technical addition, whether it was included to solve a problem or to shed light on the process by which the gilding was achieved.

As for v. 22a, it can be understood in two ways. Either it merely repeats that the walls of the entire house (Debir and Hekal) were gilded. If so, it may be a repetition of v. 21a, albeit with such an appearance of all-encompassing assertion (“the *entire* house he overlaid with gold, in order that the whole house might be *perfect*”), that it looks like a final remark that subsumes and surpasses previous assertions about gilding of various parts of the temple. Therefore, it looks like a very late addition. Or (but less likely in my view), v. 22a represents quite an extravagant claim, as Knauf has it:

¹⁷ Knauf, 239.

¹⁸ M. C. A. Korpel, “Soldering in Isaiah 40: 19-20 and 1 Kings 6: 21,” *UF* 23 (1991), 219-22.

¹⁹ Dubovský, 190-91.

Da innen nun schlechterdings alles vergoldet ist, kann sich 22a nur auf die Aussenmauern beziehen. 21-22 ist ein Zusatz, der die Gestaltung des Adytums unterbricht, und dessen Verfasser an einem schweren Fall von Goldrausch litten.²⁰

For the same reason, Mulder thinks that v. 22 in its entirety is a very late gloss, much later than v. 21.²¹

Finally, v. 22b has long been regarded as “a late, superfluous, and awkward addition,” as Stade writes laconically.²² Kittel notes that “was der Glossator [in v. 22b] mit dem Altar im Debir meint, ist vollkommen unverständlich.”²³ Indeed, the sentence is surprising, not only because of its position (it seems out of context), but also because of its phrasing, especially the relationship between the altar and the Debir: the former is no longer “in front of” the latter, it *belongs* to it.

In a word, literary-critical and content-related considerations could lead to various scenarios, whereby this or that section of v. 20-22 (according to MT) are interpolations that rendered the passage messy.

3. Text-critical issues in v. 20-22

Could text-critical considerations help us see more clearly what happened here? In v. 19-22, MT contains several plusses compared to LXX (see the table below; LXX^L is almost identical to LXX^B here, so only the latter is reproduced):

- at the beginning of v. 20, the clause “and in front of the Debir”;
- the beginning of v. 21 in MT (“Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, then he drew chains of gold across”);
- the end of v. 22 in MT (“even the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold”).

²⁰ Knauf, 239-40.

²¹ Mulder, 231.

²² Stade and Schwally, 88.

²³ R. Kittel, *Die Bücher der Könige* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), 52.

v.	MT	LXX ^B
20	וְלִפְנֵי הַדְּבִיר עֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה אָרְךְ וְעֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה רָחֵב וְעֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה קוֹמָתוֹ וַיַּצְפֹּהוּ זָהָב סָגוֹר וַיַּצֵּף מִזְבֵּחַ אָרְזוֹ	εἴκοσι πήχεις μῆκος καὶ εἴκοσι πήχεις πλάτος καὶ εἴκοσι πήχεις τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ καὶ περιέσχεν αὐτὸν χρυσίῳ συνκεκλεισμένῳ καὶ ἐποίησεν θυσιαστήριον
21a	וַיַּצֵּף שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת־הַבַּיִת מִפְּנִימָה זָהָב	
21b	סָגוֹר וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּרִתּוֹקוֹת זָהָב	κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ δαβείρ
22a	וַיַּצְפֹּהוּ זָהָב	καὶ περιέσχεν αὐτὸ χρυσίῳ
22b	וְאֶת־כָּל־הַבַּיִת צָפָה זָהָב עַד־תֵּתֵם כָּל־הַבַּיִת וְכָל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר־לְדְּבִיר צָפָה זָהָב	καὶ ὅλον τὸν οἶκον περιέσχεν χρυσίῳ ἕως συντελείας παντὸς τοῦ οἴκου
v.	MT	LXX
20	And in front of the Debir, 20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold and he overlaid an altar with cedar	20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold and he <i>made</i> an altar
21a	And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold and he spread gold over the surface by means of solder-seams	
21b	in front of the Debir and he overlaid it with gold	in front of the Debir and he overlaid it with gold
22a	And the entire house he overlaid with gold, in order that the whole house might be perfect;	And the entire house he overlaid with gold until completion of all the house

22b **and all the altar that belonged to
the Debir he overlaid with gold**

These sentences do not seem to have been dropped accidentally in LXX or its *Vorlage*, as the wording does not lend itself to parablepsis. It is more likely that they correspond to deliberate additions (in MT) or omissions (LXX). There exists a large consensus among scholars in favour of the former view, because MT seems overloaded.

Regarding v. 20, there is no straightforward explanation for the presence of the expression *וְלִפְנֵי הַדְּבִיר* in MT. Here is a possible scenario: it may be a gloss coming from a marginal note, some vestigial remains of an expression that was lost after the insertion of v. 18 (which is also an MT plus). Originally, the last word of v. 17 (*לִפְנֵי*) was immediately followed by the first word of v. 19 (*הַדְּבִיר*), so that it read: *לִפְנֵי הַדְּבִיר*. After the insertion of v. 18, the expression was split, and the last word of v. 17 was repointed *לִפְנֵי*, which is a unique, and problematic, form.²⁴

As for v. 21-22, many hypotheses have been defended. For instance, Klostermann regards the beginning of v. 21a (until *בְּרִתּוֹקוֹת זָהָב*) and v. 22b as glosses.²⁵ For Rehm, the added text is v. 21a (and the last word of v. 20) and v. 22b.²⁶ Montgomery and Gehman,²⁷ as well as Noth,²⁸ think that v. 21a and the entire v. 22 are additions. For Gray, it is rather v. 21 and 22b.²⁹ Benzinger suggested that v. 21a has been inserted after v. 22a.³⁰ Knauf believes, on the contrary, that v. 22 was added later than v. 21.³¹ For Würthwein, v. 21-22 are almost only made up of additions, except for the words “vor dem

²⁴ For an overview of interpretations, see CTAT 1, p. 342-43.

²⁵ A. Klostermann, *Die Bücher Samuelis und der Könige* (Kurzgefasster Kommentar zu den heiligen Schriften sowie zu den Apocryphen 3; Nördlingen: Beck, 1887), 296.

²⁶ M. Rehm, *Das erste Buch der Könige: Ein Kommentar* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1979), 64, 66.

²⁷ Montgomery and Gehman, 150.

²⁸ Noth, 101.

²⁹ J. Gray, *I & II Kings* (OTL; London: SCM, 1964), 159.

³⁰ I. Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Könige* (KHCAT; Leipzig/Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1899), xvii, 36.

³¹ Knauf, 218, table 8.

Schrein.”³² Fritz regards all of v. 21-22 as secondary.³³ Interestingly, these hypotheses often go beyond the mere removal of the MT plusses. At the same time, most of these proposals seem to be based on an arbitrary selection of sentences that are deemed superfluous, and as a result scholars disagree on the details. In reality, we should not be content to remove a few superfluous expressions or sentences; we should try to reconstruct the textual history of the passage in a way that accounts for the textual witnesses and their divergences. In particular, it would not be satisfying to assert that LXX is shorter, the MT plusses must be glosses, *ergo* LXX necessarily represents the oldest text. Methodologically speaking, it is necessary to account for the appearance of the plusses if we regard them as additions (as only a few scholars, such as Noth and Burney, have attempted to do; more on Burney’s theory below).

Returning to v. 21, let us begin by noting that it is not inconceivable that a copyist deleted this sentence deliberately because he did not understand the rare word בְּרִתּוֹקוֹת (after all, modern scholars still struggle with it). However, generally speaking, this kind of difficulty does not seem to be a frequent reason for intentional omissions. In fact, it is likely that copyists often reproduced sentences they did not understand clearly; it is rather when they did understand the text and were not satisfied with it, that they omitted parts of it, for instance due to ideological reasons. It appears far more probable that v. 21a is a technical addition, as already mentioned. Benzinger has suggested another explanation: he argued that v. 21a was a doublet of v. 22a, originally written in the margin of the manuscript, and later inserted in the MT in the wrong place.³⁴ But it is not really a doublet: while the beginning of the sentence is similar, the end is entirely different.

This intrusion of v. 21a had an important consequence: the original sentence “he made an altar of cedar and he overlaid it with gold” was broken into two parts separated by the interpolated sentence. The first part constitutes the last clause of v. 20, with the verb corrected according to the *Vorlage* of LXX, as we have seen, while the second part is v. 21b:

³² Würthwein, 61.

³³ Fritz, 66.

³⁴ Benzinger, xvii, 36.

וַיַּעַשׂ מִזְבֵּחַ אֶרֶז לִפְנֵי הַדְּבִיר וַיַּצִּיחֵהוּ זָהָב

According to Burney, the insertion of v. 21a has yet another consequence: the addition of v. 22b: “and the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold” (וְכָל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר־ (לְדְבִיר צָפָה זָהָב). Burney suggests that v. 22b “owes its existence to the gloss in the previous v. 21 which, by breaking the connection, destroyed the original statement referring to the gold-plating of the altar, and so caused the necessity for an additional clause to that effect.”³⁵ Accordingly (that is, if we remove v. 21a and v. 22b), the earlier state of the text comprised two successive statements:

- “he made an altar [with cedar] in front of the Debir and he overlaid it with gold” (end of v. 20 + v. 21b);
- “and the entire house he overlaid with gold until completion of all the house” (v. 22a).

Note that the Greek does not have the next word “cedar” at the end of v. 20. Perhaps this word represents an explanatory addition in MT; or it was deleted in LXX or its *Vorlage* because of a perceived contradiction with Exod 25:23, according to which the table for shewbread altar of the Tabernacle was to be made of acacia wood,³⁶ or with Exod 27:1, according to which the sacrificial altar was to be made of the same kind of wood.

Burney’s scenario is a plausible one. However, it may have several slight drawbacks. First, it requires that a (proto-MT) scribe noticed that the old sentence about the gilding of the altar (end of v. 20 + v. 21b) was missing – but where could he have found this information if it had been deleted from the text in the first place? According to Burney, this sentence belonged to the earliest text, but was subsequently “destroyed” when v. 21 was inserted. Perhaps we should suppose that this scribe had two copies of (this section of) Kings in front of him and compared them,³⁷ but this seems to me very hypothetical. This is all the more unlikely that v. 22b is

³⁵ Burney, 75. Thenius had already made a similar hypothesis (74), and later Noth also (101).

³⁶ Stade and Schwally, 88.

³⁷ Thenius, 74.

not a pure verbal repetition of the lost sentence. Indeed, the sequence of the words is different, there is a small plus (“the *entire* altar”), and as we have already noted, the altar is not “in front of” the Debir anymore, it *belongs* to it. For the same reason, it seems difficult to imagine that the scribe knew this technical text by heart and restored the lost sentence (end of v. 20 + v. 21b) thanks to his memory. Or should we assume that it is the scribe responsible for the addition of v. 21a himself, who suddenly realized that he had created chaos in v. 20-21, and who tried to make up for this mistake by repeating in v. 22b the sentence he had dismembered? If so, he was decidedly clumsy, because again, v. 22b is not a verbal reproduction of the lost sentence.

Note also that the information that this copyist was trying to save from oblivion is not that Solomon made an altar, but that he overlaid it. This suggests that the change “he made” > “he overlaid” at the end of v. 20 in MT (see above) had already happened. This also means that this information, albeit lost due to the addition of v. 21a, was not of much importance, since v. 22a already suggested that everything inside the temple was overlaid with gold. The information would have been more important if it had been about the *making* of an altar. In light of this, the motive behind the addition of v. 22b becomes elusive.³⁸

In the following, I offer another possible scenario. A resumptive repetition framing the first part of v. 22 appears if one considers both v. 21 as it is preserved in the LXX (that is, without the MT plus) and v. 22 as it is in MT (that is, with the MT plus):

³⁸ Yet another, less likely hypothesis had been formulated by Thenius (“Der Abschreiber nämlich, welcher dort nach אָרָז den Satz וְיַצְפֹּהוּ זָהָב לפני הדביר übersprungen hatte, erkannte sein Versehen, als er zum Schlusse unseres Verse kam, und fügte diesen Satz mit einem Zeichen, dass er dorthin gehöre, hier an; ein anderer Abschreiber übersah die Zeichen, fand in unsere Verse zweimal nach einander לפני הדביר geschrieben, und brachte ganz natürlich eins davon, weil er an Versehen glauben musste, in Wegfall. Eine Folge dieser Irrungen ist nun aber die zweite Hälfte von.” (72). As for the ingenious reconstruction of the text by A. Šanda, it involves a free rearrangement of the components of v. 20-22 that is extremely hypothetical (*Die Bücher der Könige. Übersetzt und erklärt*, vol. 1 [Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament 9; Münster: Aschendorff, 1911], 136).

“he made an altar [with cedar] in front of the Debir and he overlaid it with gold” (end of v. 20 + v. 21b)

“And the entire house he overlaid with gold,

in order that the whole house might be perfect” (v. 22a)

“and the entire altar that belonged to the Debir he overlaid with gold” (v. 22b)

In other words, the second part of v. 22 was added by way of a *Wiederaufnahme*, but this resumptive repetition was partially hidden when the first plus, in v. 21, was inserted. The last part of v. 22 was probably deleted later in the transmission of LXX or its *Vorlage* because it is redundant. Juha Pakkala has pointed out many instances of deliberate omissions for a variety of reasons, including a desire to eliminate redundancies.³⁹ As Jan Joosten has demonstrated in the case of the Twelve Minor Prophets, it is a well-attested phenomenon that copyists of LXX deleted some sentences or expressions that they deemed uselessly repetitive.⁴⁰ The same phenomenon occurred during the transmission of Kings.⁴¹

This scenario entails a different relative chronology for the changes that were made in the text. The chain of events would have been the following:

1. The earliest text only stated that “he made an altar [with cedar] in front of the Debir and overlaid it with gold” (end of v. 20 + v. 21b).⁴²
2. A scribe inserted v. 22a and framed this addition with a *Wiederaufnahme* by adding v. 22b. Thereafter, the paths diverge and lead to the textual witnesses as we know them:
- 3a. During the transmission of LXX or its *Vorlage*, at some later point, v. 22b was omitted because it was redundant with the end

³⁹ J. Pakkala, *God’s Word Omitted: Omissions in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible* (FRLANT 251; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

⁴⁰ J. Joosten, “A Septuagintal Translation Technique in the Minor Prophets: The Elimination of Verbal Repetitions” in F. García Martínez, M. Vervenne (eds.), *Interpreting Translation. Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (BETHL 192; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 217-223.

⁴¹ M. Richelle, “Intentional Omissions in the Textual History of the Books of Kings: In Search of Methodological Criteria,” *Semitica* 58 (2016): 146-48.

⁴² This corresponds exactly to the text reconstructed by Noth, 96.

of v. 20 + v. 21b. From then on, the *Wiederaufnahme* was not apparent anymore in LXX.

- 3b. In MT, a later scribe inserted v. 21a, an explicative sentence that was perhaps once written in the margin of the scroll (as was apparently done quite frequently). This intrusion broke the first and earliest sentence about the altar (end of v. 20 + v. 21b) into two segments that are now separated by v. 21a, which also means that the first part of the frame of the resumptive repetition is not apparent anymore in MT.⁴³

	Earliest text	Text after insertion of v. 22b by way of a <i>Wiederaufnahme</i>	MT	LXX
20	20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold and he made an altar [with cedar (?)]	20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold <u>and he overlaid an altar [with cedar (?)]</u>	And in front of the Debir, 20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold and he overlaid an altar with cedar	20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold and he <i>made</i> an altar
21a			And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold and he spread gold over the surface by means of solder- seams	
21b	in front of the Debir	<u>in front of the Debir</u>	in front of the Debir	in front of the Debir

⁴³ It is possible that “cedar” at the end of v. 20 was absent from the earliest text, and that once v. 21 was inserted, the sentence “he made an altar” was interrupted, and a later scribe felt it necessary to indicate the material of which the altar was made, hence the addition of “cedar”.

	and he overlaid it with gold	<u>and he overlaid it with gold</u>	and he overlaid it with gold	and he overlaid it with gold
22a	And the entire house he overlaid with gold, in order that the whole house might be perfect;	And the entire house he overlaid with gold, in order that the whole house might be perfect;	And the entire house he overlaid with gold, in order that the whole house might be perfect;	And the entire house he overlaid with gold until completion of all the house
22b	<u>and all the altar that belonged to the Debir he over- laid with gold</u>	and all the altar that belonged to the Debir he over- laid with gold		

Since, in this scenario, v. 22a was interpolated at a time when v. 21a had not yet been inserted, it was the first mention of the gilding of the entire house in the chapter. Therefore, the original meaning of v. 22a was probably that not only the Debir but also Hekal was gilded. If v. 21 had already been present, the reader might have understood that v. 22a concerned the exterior walls, as noted by Knauf (see above), but in the original context it was not the case.

This scenario may be a bit speculative. After all, the resumptive repetition is not attested as such in any textual witnesses. Here we are at the limit between textual criticism and compositional criticism. But the textual witnesses do contain all the dots that must be connected for the *Wiederaufnahme* to be unveiled – an editorial technique that played a significant role in the growth of the Books of Kings, and the traces of which are often preserved only in LXX.⁴⁴ Here, the result is a reconstruction of the textual history of the passage that is, in my view, plausible. Importantly, *the earliest form of this passage only said that the Debir and the altar were overlaid with gold*. It makes sense, as a clear difference between the Debir and the Hekal reappears.

⁴⁴ This has been demonstrated by J. Treballe Barrera in various studies, for instance “The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in the Books of Kings,” in C. E. Cox (ed.), *VII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (Atlanta: SBL, 1991), 285-99, esp. 296-97. See also Richelle, 157.

In addition, perhaps we can now understand the reason why the altar is mentioned here: it is probably because it shared this common feature – being gilded – with the Debir in front of which it stood, a feature absent from the Hekal where the altar was erected.

There is yet another possible advantage to our hypothesis. The fact that v. 22b is not a pure verbal repetition of the initial sentence finally finds an explanation. When a scribe creates a resumptive repetition in a text, he does not necessarily make a pure repetition, he often introduces variations, whether by reduction and/or by re-formulation. A striking example appears in Kgs 10:29-31, where v. 30 has been added and framed by v. 29 and 31 (see table).

²⁹ But Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he caused Israel to commit—the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.

³⁰ The LORD said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in carrying out what I consider right, and in accordance with all that was in my heart have dealt with the house of Ahab, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.”

³¹ But Jehu was not careful to follow the law of the LORD the God of Israel with all his heart; he did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam, which he caused Israel to commit.

רק חטאי ירבעם בְּיָדָבֵט אֲשֶׁר
הֶחֱטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־סֹר
יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם עֲגָלֵי הַזָּהָב
אֲשֶׁר בֵּית־אֵל וְאֲשֶׁר בְּדָן
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוָה יַעֲן אֲשֶׁר־
הִטִּיבְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינַי
כָּל אֲשֶׁר בִּלְבָבִי עָשִׂיתָ לְבֵית
אֲחָאָב בְּנֵי רָבְעִים יָשֻׁבוּ לְךָ עַל־
כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל

וְיְהוָה לֹא שָׁמַר לְלֶכֶת בְּתוֹרַת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־לִבָּבוֹ
לֹא סָר מֵעַל חַטָּאוֹת יִרְבְּעָם
אֲשֶׁר הֶחֱטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל

Both parts of the frame contain a similar sentence about Jehu not turning aside from the sins of Jeroboam, but there are interesting differences:

- the sequence of words in this sentence is inverted (in accordance with Seidel’s law);
- the genitival construction meaning “sins of Jeroboam” is slightly different (חטאי ירבעם in v. 29; חטאות ירבעם in v. 31); in fact, v. 29 is the only place in Kings where this form occurs (and there are only three other occurrences of in the Hebrew Bible);⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Gen 41:9; Isa 38:17; Am 9: 10.

- whereas normally in Kings, after לֹא-סָר the preposition *min* precedes a mention of the sins of Jeroboam, in v. 29 it is not the case; rather, this preposition is followed by a clause about the golden caves of Bethel and Dan;
- v. 31 also contains a theological remark, but it is entirely different, it is a nomistic criticism of Jehu.

In sum, 2 Kings 29-31 is a striking case where the two parts of the frame of a *Wiederaufnahme* are clearly different.

Conclusion

It is the scholarly consensus that 1 Kgs 6:21-22 is overloaded. However, scholars disagree on which parts of this passage are secondary. It is not just a matter of removing some superfluous sentences or expressions; we must explain how the differences between MT and LXX arose. Few have proposed a reconstruction of the textual history of this passage that can solve this problem; Burney’s proposal is probably the most interesting. This article provides a new possible hypothesis. It is important to note that as often in textual criticism, the data do not allow us to *prove* a given scenario; what is within the reach of scholarly investigation is to propose models that are inevitably underdetermined by the data, but that may account for them. The question, then, is how plausible such models are, and whether some are more probable than others. The model proposed may be slightly speculative, but it accounts for the data in both MT and LXX, and it does not share the difficulties contained in Burney’s hypothesis; moreover, it explains some features of the text that otherwise remain enigmatic.

Interestingly, if this new proposal is correct, there is an important consequence with regard to the contents of the text: the earliest form of 1 Kings 6 did not assert that all the walls of the Temple were overlaid with gold; it was only the case of the Debir. The notion that “the whole house” was gilded (v. 22a) seems to have been introduced secondarily in the text by a redactor, contrary to what several scholars concluded in the past.⁴⁶ While the

⁴⁶ Notably Klostermann, Rehm and Gray (see references in fn. 23, 24, 27).

secondary character of v. 22a has already been suspected by some other scholars on purely literary-critical and content-related grounds (it would be an addition undetectable by means of textual criticism), the new hypothesis defended here provides a combination of literary-critical and textual considerations that support this notion. A simple analysis of the textual data could not lead to this conclusion, because v. 22a is present in both MT and LXX; however, the hypothesis of a *Wiederaufnahme* implies that it is an interpolation. The scribe who added this sentence made a significant contribution to the way this text was to be read in later history, since the notion of a Temple entirely gilded was to receive a considerable reception throughout centuries.